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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
The Director of Intelligence and Research

**CATEGORY "A"**

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary

FROM: DNR - Roger Hillsman

SUBJECT: Implications of the Soviet Initiative  
on Cuba

As you directed, we have analyzed and attempted to evaluate the situation resulting from the latest Soviet initiative, paying special attention to potential pitfalls.

Part I below capsules the situation now existing.

Part II analyzes the Soviet proposals.

Part III is concerned with the possible motivations behind this Soviet initiative.

Part IV is concerned with the problems and possible pitfalls which US policy will have to confront in any negotiations.

At Tab A is a narrative of the immediate circumstances leading up to the present situation.

At Tab B as a convenient device for summarizing the conclusions of this paper, is a proposed reply by the President to Khrushchev's letter of October 26.

I. The Situation

Both the US and the USSR have now acted to produce the pre-conditions for negotiations:

(1) Both sides have accepted the U Thant formula:  
a. Both sides will temporarily keep their ships out of the Caribbean Sea (noted: it is not entirely clear from the text whether they intend to keep all their ships out or only those carrying armaments); and the United

States will refrain from intercepting Soviet ships outside the quarantine areas.

(2) The Soviets, recognizing that the prospect of withdrawing their missiles is a pre-requisite for negotiations, have made the necessary offer in Khrushchev's letter of October 26

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By these two moves the Soviets have avoided a direct confrontation with the United States, opened the avenue for talks, and at least postponed direct efforts to remove their missiles.

### III. Moscow's Proposed Basis for Negotiations.

The Khrushchev letter, in its language, is not entirely clear about the settlement which is offered. The elements of the settlement are (1) a Soviet declaration that Soviet ships will not carry armaments to Cuba (aircraft and ships of other nationalities under Soviet Charter are not mentioned); (2) the United States would declare that it will not invade Cuba with US troops and will not support others who might intend to invade Cuba (i.e. the US would cease, inter alia giving support to organized exile groups); (3) once this US declaration had been made, the need for Soviet "specialists" would disappear. At another place in the letter, Khrushchev phrases this point both more broadly and more rigorously. He says that if "assurances" were given by the President that the United States would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others, and if the United States would recall its fleet (i.e., actually call off the quarantine); "evidently" Cuba would demobilize and the question of armaments would disappear. (This language approximates that used by President Dorticos in the UN General Assembly and subsequently quoted by the Cuban UN delegate in the Security Council on October 23.)

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What Moscow seems to be suggesting is the removal of at least the offensive weapons from Cuba (i.e., those whose introduction triggered the US quarantine) in exchange for a US commitment to desist from the use of force against Castro.

The unclarities and omissions in the Soviet proposals, which are dealt with in Part IV below, are to be expected in an initial approach designed to bring about negotiations.

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The fact that, contrary to expectations, the Soviets do not seek to link the Cuba issue with extraneous matters, such as the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy, adds interest to the Soviet approach.

We conclude that Moscow intends its approach to be taken seriously as an offer to negotiate on the question of the Soviet missiles in Cuba. However, the USSR has put forward only the outlines of an arrangement -- and rather general, and at times confusing outlines at that. There is no Soviet offer to remove the missiles until after the US gives certain assurances and the precise nature of the required assurances remains uncertain.

In Khrushchev's view, his latest initiative can accomplish (1) at least a temporary stand-off on the quarantine issue, with the danger of incidents minimized, and (2) the continued presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba while negotiations proceed in which numerous important details remain to be settled. In other words, what he is seeking is a situation in which the removal of the missiles is not a pre-condition but an object of negotiation. And the outcome of these negotiations remains uncertain.

III. Motivations Behind the Soviet Initiative.

If the Soviets find themselves compelled to agree on a formula which -- essentially -- results in the withdrawal of their missiles, bombers, and military technicians from Cuba in exchange for nothing more than our commitment not to invade or support invasion of Cuba, it is difficult to see how they can regard this as anything but a serious setback. Moscow will, of course, still claim a victory, asserting that the US has been forced by Soviet power to abandon the cherished goal of invading Cuba and destroying "Communist" Cuba. But the truth will be plain to all and not least to Castro -- the USSR will have accepted less than the status quo ante. If this is so, why have the Soviets advanced a proposition which we, on our part, would presumably not have regarded as worth advancing for serious consideration in the Kremlin? The inescapable conclusion is that Khrushchev, if he really envisions agreement on this basis, is frightened of the prospect of an escalating confrontation.

If, on the other hand, Khrushchev does not intend the proposed negotiations to lead to agreement, it can be argued that he is not really backing down but only playing for time by delaying the moment of explicit confrontation. The main advantage, in addition to political ones, that two weeks or a month would confer on the Soviets is greater operational readiness of the MRBM sites in Cuba and achievement of an ICBM capability. Such an advantage is not decisive in the unlikely event Khrushchev were contemplating a first strike at the US. It could conceivably, however, represent that amount of additional threat to the US mainland which, in the Soviet view, might give Moscow greater freedom of action in Berlin, for example. If this is so, the present gambit could represent a Soviet effort to ensure a planned increment of power against the time when we were confronted with a Soviet challenge not in the Cuban context. In other words, Khrushchev might prefer to face us with the kind of challenge we offered to him by the blockade in a different arena where he has the local advantage. To do so, he must buy time in Cuba and would thus not be acting from fright.

We find it difficult to judge whether Khrushchev is frightened or shrewdly playing for time. His overt actions

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are compatible with either thesis. We find it difficult to believe, however, that he ordered the massive and rapid Cuban military buildup only to bargain it away for a US promise not to invade. If this judgment is correct, it would be dangerous to assume that Khrushchev's offer to negotiate is aimed at an early agreement on terms which on their face offer him astonishingly little.

But if altruism is not a Soviet failing, miscalculation might be. Whatever the reason, prudence suggests that an essential pre-condition for negotiations must be either that the Soviets stop work on the missile sites or that there be a very short deadline on the negotiations themselves. The first ICBM site at Guanajay is expected to have an emergency operational capability on November 15; the other sites will have a similar capability by December 1.

#### Part IV. Problems and Pitfalls in Negotiations.

The United States must anticipate the following problems and pitfalls in dealing with Soviet initiative:

(1) Although Moscow is suggesting the removal of at least the offensive weapons from Cuba, the precise sequence of steps by which such an arrangement would be effected is left unclear.

(2) Neither Khrushchev nor the USSR deal with the problem of Cuban aggression or subversion in Latin America.

(3) A Castro assurance not to accept offensive weapons means either constant and indefinite surveillance of Cuba or the opening up of Cuban society, which is incompatible with the Communist system.

(4) Can the United States continue unilateral surveillance?

(5) What do the Communists mean by effective guarantees that the US will not invade Cuba? Will they make inspection of Florida and the Caribbean area a condition and is this condition acceptable politically?

(6) What kind of relations would the US be able to maintain with the Cuban exiles?

(7) Is it politically possible for the US in effect to guarantee the permanence of the Castro regime?

(8) Is the maintenance of Guantanamo compatible with the guarantee of Cuban "integrity"?

(9) Would the US be precluded from taking action in the other contingencies listed in the President's September 13 speech?

(10) Since Khrushchev will not distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons, what assurances do we have that bombers will be removed as well as missiles?

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The Immediate Circumstances

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A check of the UN Security Council debates reveals that on October 23, the Cuban Delegate Garcia-Inchaustegui quoted a previous statement by Dorticos as follows:

"Were the United States able to give Cuba effective guarantees and satisfactory proof concerning the integrity of Cuban territory, and were it to cease its subversive and counter-revolutionary activities against our people, then Cuba would not have to strengthen its defenses. Cuba would not even need an army, and all the resources that are used for this could be gratefully and happily invested in the economic and cultural development of the country. Were the United States able to give us proof, by word and deed, that it would not carry out aggression against our country, then, we declare solemnly before you here and now, our weapons would be unnecessary and our army redundant. We believe ourselves able to create peace." (S/PV 1022 page 15).

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Similar signals have also been given at the UN, and, 48 hours earlier, by the Soviet Ambassador to Indonesia.

Simultaneously with the above Khrushchev made a slightly different proposal in his latest letter. The operative paragraphs are as follows:

- (1) The penultimate paragraph of Part III (Moscow's IIOL)

"If assurances were given by the President and the government of the United States that the US itself would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others from actions of this sort, if you would recall your fleet, this would immediately change everything. I am not speaking for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the government of Cuba, evidently, would declare demobilization and would appeal to the people to get down to peaceful labor. Then, too, the question of armaments would disappear."



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since, if there is no threat, then armaments are a burden for every people. Then, too, the question of the destruction, not only of the armaments which you call offensive, but of all other armaments as well, would look different."

(2) The second paragraph of Part IV:

"Let us therefore show statesmanlike wisdom. I propose: we, for our part, will declare that our ships, bound for Cuba, will not carry any kind of armaments. You would declare that the United States will not invade Cuba with its forces and will not support any sort of forces which might intend to carry out an invasion of Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear."

Significantly, and contrary to expectations, Khrushchev did not seek to link the Cuban issue with such matters as the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy.

Two other points must be kept in mind. The first is the fact that both the US and apparently the USSR have accepted the U Thant proposal that for a temporary period the USSR will keep its ships out of the quarantine areas and the US will not intercept ships outside of these areas.

The second is the President's statement of September 13 in which he laid down the following three conditions:

"If [1] at any time the Communist build-up in Cuba were to endanger or interfere with our security in any way, including our base at Guantanamo, our passage to the Panama Canal, our missile and space activities at Cape Canaveral, or the lives of American citizens in this country, or [2] if Cuba should ever attempt to export its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force against any nation in this hemisphere, or [3] become an

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offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies."

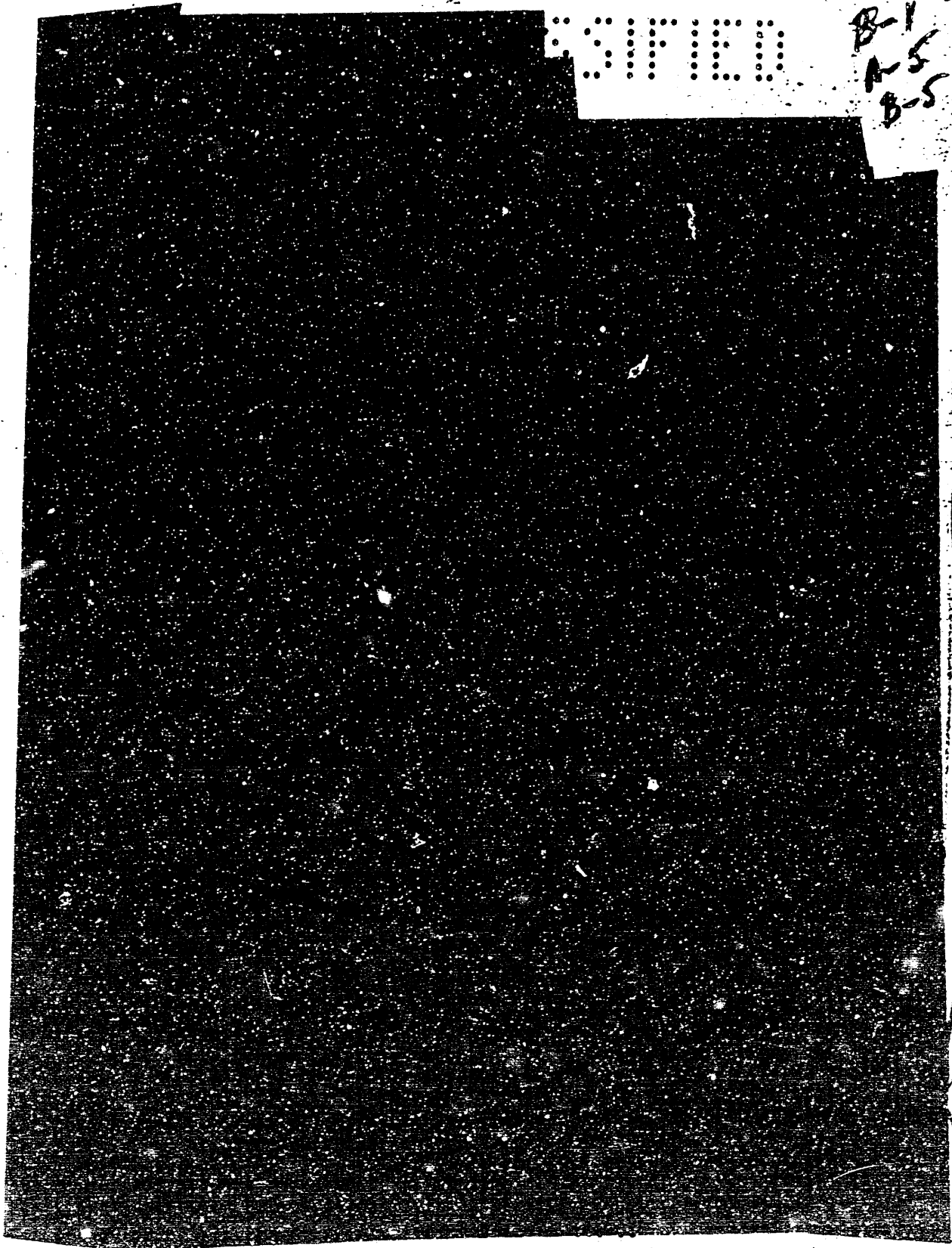
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Deputy Under Secretary

G/PM

October 27, 1962

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Military Significance of the Soviet  
Missile Bases in Cuba

NOTE: This memorandum is intended for background use by  
USUN, and for senior officers in discussions with  
outside contacts.

1. The Soviet missile complex in Cuba, in conjunction with other Soviet intercontinental capabilities, poses an appreciably heightened threat to the US strategic retaliatory forces, and therefore to the Free World deterrent.
2. There are more than 30 long-range missile launchers in Cuba, of which over half are already fully operational. The Soviet Union is continuing at rapid pace to complete construction of those missile sites not yet operational.
3. It is now clear that the two dozen defensive missile sites established in Cuba during the late summer and early fall were not intended to "defend" the Cuban people, as is claimed, so much as to provide protective cover for the offensive Soviet threat. The areas first covered by these defensive sites were precisely those areas where the offensive missiles have now been built. It is now known that the Soviet decision to build Cuba into a massive military threat was taken several months ago; the hypocrisy of Soviet deception over its motives in Cuba has had a long career.

FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

*[Signature]* 2/2/62

**DRAFT FOLLOWS**

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY

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October 26, 1962

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Military Significance of the Soviet  
Missile Bases in Cuba

NOTE: This memorandum is intended for discreet background use by USUN, and for guidance of senior officers in discussions with outside contacts.

The main themes to be kept in mind are:

(1) If an unimpeded buildup had been permitted to continue, the whole balance of Western superiority--upon which the peace of the world has long rested--would have been imperiled.

(2) The Soviet missile complex already operational in Cuba, in conjunction with other Soviet intercontinental capabilities, does pose an appreciably heightened threat to the US strategic retaliatory forces, and therefore to the Free World deterrent.

(3) The Soviet Union is continuing at rapid pace to complete construction of those missile sites not yet operational.

(4) There are more than 30 long-range missile launchers in Cuba, of which over half are already fully operational.

(5) It is now clear that the two dozen defensive missile sites established in Cuba during the late summer and early fall were not intended to "defend" the Cuban people, as is claimed, so much as to provide protective cover for the offensive Soviet threat. The areas first covered by these defensive sites were precisely those areas where the offensive missiles have now been built.

(6) It is now known that the Soviet decision to build Cuba into a massive military threat was taken several months ago; the hypocrisy of Soviet deception over its motives in Cuba has had a long career. Even now the Soviets oscillate between denial and attempts at justification, impaled on the facts that they can do neither convincingly.

(7) The only way to restore the peace is by the removal of the offensive threat introduced by the Soviet Union into Cuba.

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